

Japanese Literature Studies in India : Recent Development and Challenges

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Japanese Literature Studies in India: Recent Development and Challenges

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In the recent past India has witnessed a tremendous upsurge in Japanese literature studies, research and translations. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the reasons for this sudden growth while providing a detailed overview of the recent developments in the field of Japanese literature research and translations with special reference to emerging interest in poetry. This paper would also attempt to identify some of the problems and challenges that need to be addressed for sustainable endeavour and growth in the field of mutual literature between India and Japan.

In fact, the last few years have seen over a dozen books on Japanese poetry being published in India. These books have been possible due to collaborative research and translations between Japanese literature experts and Indian poets. These have provided a positive and enabling environment for literary exchange between India and Japan. It also needs to be noted that Japanese literature has very swiftly entered the domain of public readership in India, similar to that witnessed during the 1970s with respect to Russian literature.

To have an overview of the trends and status of research and translations in the field of Japanese literature in India this paper is divided into two parts. The first part narrates the story of development, while the second part presents a comprehensive bibliographic study of Japanese literature carried out in India during 2004–09.

1. First Three Phases

In my earlier writings on the same theme I have identified three distinct phases in the development of Japanese literature studies and research in India. The first phase began in mid-1950s when translations of *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) were carried out in quite a few Indian languages. Considered as one of the earliest novels the first translation of Genji appeared in Hindi (1957) followed by Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Urdu and Assamese languages. These translations were based on English sources and were carried out at the initiatives of the Sahitya Academy, as part of its project on making world literature available in Indian languages. Though mainly confined to prose literature this initiative lost its momentum by the late 1960s.

This period also saw adaptations of Japanese folk tales, children's stories and translations of Natsume Sōseki's *Kokoro* and Dazai Osamu's *Shayō*. A few travel accounts of Japan also appeared in print in various Indian languages. Around the same time Sachchidanand Vatsyayan Agyeya, a notable Indian writer and literary critic was engaged in Hindi adaptation and translation of haiku poetry. 1960s saw emergence of haiku poetry in Hindi and other languages of India. Satya Bhushan Verma further carried on the haiku tradition well into the early 1980s. A couple of attempts in translating Japanese verses in Bangla and Asamiya can also be noted in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The second phase began with the publication of *Japan: Sahitya ki Jhalak* (Japan: Glimpses of Literature, in Hindi) in 1975. This compilation of translations provided a comprehensive overview of Japanese literature incorporating all literary genre including noh and kabuki theatres, and Hindi translations of selected literary works such as those of Kawabata Yasunari and Abe Kōbō, besides the medieval diaries such as the *Kagerō nikki*. A major section of the book is devoted to translating Japanese poetry from the extant *Man'yōshū* and Bashō's haiku. One also gets a glimpse of Japanese poetic sensibilities and aesthetics in 'waka' and 'tanka' of Ishikawa Takuboku, besides those of the contemporary poets such as Shiraishi Kazuko. This book was an outcome of a collaborative effort between Indian and Japanese scholars of Hindi and Japanese literatures at the Kansai University of Foreign Studies, Osaka. It provided an opportunity to the Hindi readers to acquaint themselves with some of the salient features of Japanese literature. Agyeya's haiku and *Sahitya ki Jhalak* paved the ground for the growth of Japanese literature in India. It needs to be mentioned that these developments in Japanese literature remained confined to Hindi and were carried out on the basis of secondary sources in English.

After a relative lull during the 1980s, a revival of interest in Japanese literature was ushered in during the mid-1990s. This marks the emergence of the third phase of Japanese literature in India. One of the distinctive features of this phase was that the translations and research were now based on original Japanese sources. The nature of growth and trends in Japanese literature research in India during the third phase i.e. 1990–2004 has been discussed in detail in my earlier papers. A critical evaluation of translations has been carried out by Jain. However, it is worth mentioning a few as listed below:

- a. During the third phase a group of scholars trained in Japanese language and literature studies emerged for the first time and found teaching positions in Indian Universities. Some even quit their lucrative company jobs and joined the university system.
- b. Translations and research based on original Japanese text began at a much rapid pace around 1990 and it became far more organized and regular than the pre-1990 phase.

A major landmark in the history of Japanese literature in India took place in 2002 when

translations of about 50 Japanese fictions, and folktales where published in 12 volumes commemorating the golden jubilee of India-Japan diplomatic relationship. These 12 volumes provided wide coverage in terms of representative works of various authors of Modern Japan.

Towards the end of the third phase teaching of Japanese literature began through the introduction of post-graduate Master's program in Japanese at the University of Delhi, which had a heavy literature component in its curriculum.

Table 1: List of Master's dissertations submitted on Japanese literature 2000–2010

Year	Title of the dissertation
2000	<i>Tsuchi</i> : Bungaku sakuhin toshite no kaiseki
2000	<i>Hyakuninissu</i> no meissho
2001	<i>Izu no odoriko</i> : Bungaku sakuhin toshite kaiseki
2001	<i>Kaze tachinu</i> ni okeru ai to shi
2002	<i>Kinosaki nite</i> : Shiga Naoya
2002	<i>Rashōmon</i> to <i>Konjaku monogatari</i> no hikaku
2003	Inoue Yasushi: <i>Tōgyū</i> no kaiseki
2003	Endō Shūsaku: <i>Fukai kawa</i>
2003	Natsume Sōseki: <i>Kokoro</i>
2003	Tanizaki Junichirō: <i>Sasameyuki</i>
2003	Ōe Kenzaburō: <i>Sorano kaibutsu 'Aguī'</i>
2003	Mishima Yukio: <i>Yūkoku</i> no kaiseki
2004	Hirabayashi Taiko no <i>Kaifū Onna</i>
2004	Hori Tatsuo no <i>Utsukushii mura</i>
2004	<i>Taketori monogatari</i> ni miru Indo
2004	Higuchi Ichiyō no <i>Jūsan ya</i>
2004	Yoshimoto Banana no <i>Kitchen</i>
2004	Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: <i>Kumo no ito</i>
2005	Shiga Naoya ni okeru jiko zettaika— <i>Wakai</i> wo chūshin ni
2005	Mishima: <i>Kinkakuji</i> ni okeru bi to shi
2005	Chikamatsu Monzaemon no <i>Sonezaki shinjū</i>
2006	<i>Wakai</i> wo chūshin ni Shiga Naoya no sakuhin ni okeru jinseikan
2006	Haharokuya
2006	<i>Sangetsu ki</i>
2006	Dazai Osamu no sakuhin no bunseki
2006	Kokoro no baka no Sanshuo
2007	<i>Oku no hosomichi</i> : Tabi no Mokuteki to chosha no kisetu no kankaku
2007	Ōgai no jinsei taiken wo haikai toshita shujinkō Toyotarō no seikakuteki yowasa no yōsō
2007	<i>Bochchan</i> no seikaku bunseki
2007	Midarekokoro: Yosano Akiko no <i>Midaregami</i> ni okeru tanka no kaishaku to kanshō
2007	Endō Shūsaku no <i>Umi to dokuyaku</i> ni tsuite
2008	<i>Sanshirō</i> : Mineko no seikaku bunseki
2008	Tawara Machi no tanka no atarashii hōhō to bunseki
2008	<i>Rashōmon</i> no bunseki
2009	Tsuboi Sakae: <i>Akai sutekki</i> no bunseki

2009	Ibuse Masuji: <i>Koi no bunseki</i>
2010	Ibuse Masuji: <i>Kuroi ame</i>
2010	<i>Ryōjū</i> : Inoue Yasushi
2010	<i>Hanaoka Seishū no tsuma</i> : Ariyoshi Sawako
2010	<i>Akuma</i> : Tanizaki Jun'ichirō
2010	<i>Bangiku</i> : Hayashi Fumiko
2010	<i>Ginga tetsudō no yoru</i> : Miyazawa Kenji
2010	<i>Hikage no hana</i> : Nagai Kafū
2010	<i>Noruwei no mori</i> , <i>Dansu dansu dansu</i> , <i>Sputnik sweeto haato</i> : Murakami Haruki

While the post-graduate courses on Japanese literature in DU is older by about 10 years, it is JNU from where the first crop of researchers on Japanese literature completed their doctoral research.

2. Fourth Phase

One could say that the research and translation activities in Japanese literature had consolidated itself by the late 1990s and was rearing to embark upon more difficult and challenging terrains. Developing teaching and research curriculum was the first task. There were systemic and institutional difficulties encountered in this process. It took almost 5 years before the literature stream in Japanese could be formally introduced in JNU. The MA course has been introduced in the Department of Vishwa Bharati only two years back and is still in its nascent stage of development. In spite of all possible efforts at curriculum upgradation of the post-graduate courses in Japanese literature in the last five years little could be achieved at DU. The proposal to introduce research programme in the area of Japanese literature at DU has been kept in the cold storage in spite of the rising demand among the students. Notwithstanding these constraints the growth profile both in terms of quantity and quality of research and translations in Japanese literature has grown unabated charting new areas of interest particularly since 2004. This I term as the fourth phase of growth in Japanese literature research and studies. The salient features of this phase are underlined below:

- a. Exponential growth in research and translation activities in the area of Japanese literature during 2005–09. In just five years about 200 translations and 104 (54 published and 50 under publication) research papers/monographs have been already completed.
- b. Increased collaborative research and teaching with Japanese Universities and scholars.
- c. New crop of researchers in the field of Japanese literature have come up both in DU and JNU. As per information available with the author about eight M. Phil dissertations and two doctoral research were completed and perhaps some more were in the pipeline when the information was

being compiled.

d. Indian students going on Mombushō and Japan Foundation fellowships are increasingly taking literature studies as their proposed area of research. Currently about a dozen Indian students are continuing their doctoral research in various Japanese universities.

e. It is very encouraging that many students today prefer to continue their studies further than going for lucrative jobs in the industries. Teaching and research rather than company jobs are increasingly becoming popular. Young scholars would like to have jobs in the universities. Eight to ten years back we did not have adequate number of applicants for a lecturer's post, but now 14 to 16 candidates apply for one post.

f. A large number of literary translations that have appeared in the last five years have seen active participation and collaboration between the scholars, translators and poets from India and Japan besides the Japanese and Hindi language experts in order to produce some of the finest literary translations.

g. Translating Japanese poetry has acquired the center stage in the last five years.

h. While translations based on original sources have increased, those using secondary English or Hindi translations in order to render the same in other Indian languages has also increased manifold. As a matter of fact the movement towards literary translations has become strong in both segments i.e. based on original and based on secondary translations. Expansion of Japanese literature studies and translations has augured well for both the Japanese language experts and experts in other Indian languages. This has been responsible for a remarkable increase in literary translations in several Indian languages with Bangla, Marathi, and Telugu being in the forefront.

i. Recent trend is to publish translations in bilingual format, keeping the original alongside the translated. This provides several advantages to the students of Japanese language as well as the generations to follow who may further improvise on the quality and nuances.

j. Diversity of research themes providing the Indian perspectives on Japanese literature.

k. Another recent trend is that Japanese literature is increasingly acquiring an important place in comparative literature studies in India. This has largely been made possible because of increased interaction between Japanese and Indian scholars, writers and poets. Recently a scholar of Hindi

literature has carried out his research on haiku and tanka.

l. Another trend in continued efforts in the area of Indo-Japan Poetry has been innumerable poetry sessions where poets recited their original and translated poems. It was started in 2005 and has been continuing since then. This event took the form of Mushaira in 2007 and in 2008. This was an attempt to facilitate translation of Japanese poetry into Urdu and Urdu poetry into Japanese. Mushaira was organized on a large scale where renowned Urdu poets participated and read their verses in original and translations in Japanese. It was a remarkable fusion of Indo-Japan poetry that took place on the sidelines of the Indo-Japan Meet on Ishikawa Takuboku. This brought together eminent artists, poets, writers and critics on the occasion of the Japan Cultural Month.

m. Another variation of our continued effort has found yet another medium of expression—Poetry on Canvas. This event was held twice by young artists who conceptualized the poems of Ishikawa Takuboku, Ono no Komachi and Shiraishi Kazuko as they could on canvases.

n. Premier institutions such as JNU have successfully put necessary academic infrastructure and expertise in the promotion of literature research. Until about a decade ago the School of Language, Literature and Culture, JNU offered pre-PhD in Japanese language and literature. It did not have the MPhil programme, which suited the interest of fresh post-graduate students. The MPhil programme was available in the School of International Studies, which was oriented towards conducting research on subjects such as international relations, diplomacy, trade and commerce, technology transfers, politics and society and understandably did not have specialized faculty in language, literature and culture studies. This scenario changed with School of Languages expanding its mandate to include literature and culture studies. Until then the school remained dedicated to teaching foreign languages with a view to facilitating international communications by producing skilled interpreters and translators. Translation skills were largely confined to meeting the requirements in social sciences, science and technology. Translation of literature was not altogether absent though. However given the demand for scientific and technical translations and interpretations in the market, which offered lucrative pay packages, especially since the mid-1980s literary translation could not receive the attention it required. Moreover, English being one of the major mediums of instruction in Indian universities, and given the availability of translated literature in English, the need for promoting literary translations remained somewhat feeble. This has changed significantly in the second half of the current decade.

o. In spite of the lure of the market and attractions for business and technology interpretation, the area of literary translation quietly expanded, particularly in the context of Japanese literature. The need and importance of direct translation from source to the target languages was gradually realized due to cultural sensibilities which the European translations failed to capture.

p. Literary translations and research in literature are essentially complementary. The futility of cosmetic segregation between Japanese language and literature streams as also interpretation/translation and literature studies has become more apparent in the recent past as every interpretation skill remains inadequate without adequate exposure to literature and culture.

3. Factors Responsible for Phenomenal Growth

i. Role of Seminars/ Conferences/ Workshops

There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of seminars, conferences and workshops on themes pertaining to Japanese literature. These have become a major academic activity since 2002 when the first conference on Indo-Japan Mutual literature was organized in New Delhi. Regular seminar and conferences provided the necessary opportunity to both the established and budding researchers, and students to present their papers, which in turn have raised their skills and confidence significantly.

Table 2: Conferences/Seminars & Workshops on Japanese Literature

S.N	Year/Date	Place	Title of the Seminar/Workshop	Organizers
1	March 15–20, 1984	Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi	1 st Int'l Conference on Literature in Translation	J.N.U.
2	Nov. 5–6, 1992	Tagore Hall, DU	Two Day Seminar on “Asian Countries and Indian Culture”	The Culture Council, DU
3	Nov. 18–20, 1993	Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi	Workshop on Translating Arima Takashi's poems	J.N.U. & Sahitya Akademi
4	Jan. 27–29, 1995	JNU, New Delhi	Annual Conference of ICAPS	ICAPS & JNU,
5	Aug. 17–18, 1996	Dept .C&J	National Seminar on Contemporary Trends in Literature in Asia	BHU
6	2001	IIC	All India Japanese Language workshop: Special Session on Japanese Literature	JALTAI
7	Feb. 8, 2001	Japan foundation	Kawabata Yasunari no sei to shi: Nihonjin no shiseikan by Hamakawa Katsuhiko	JF
8	Feb. 24, 2001	BHU	Nihon kindai bungaku ni okeru Indo	Japan Foundation
9	Dec. 20–21, 2001	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Lekhak Caravan I (A Meet of Indian & Japanese Authors)	Japan Foundation
10	Sept. 2002	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Lekhak Caravan II (A Meet of Indian & Japanese Authors)	Japan Foundation
11	Jan. 2–4, 2002	BHU, Varanasi	Japan's Role in South Asia (Literature & Culture Section)	BHU & Japan Foundation

12	Oct. 26–27, 2002	India Habitat Centre	Enduring ties Between India And Japan Through Literature: Its History and Future Prospects	DEAS, DU
13	Oct. 13, 2003	Japan Foundation, New-Delhi	Training programme for Japanese Language Teachers: Special Session on “Translation: Social Science and literature” & “Japanese Literature”	JALTAI
14	Oct. 10, 2004	Japan Foundation, New-Delhi	Training programme for Japanese Language Teachers: Special Sessions on “Japanese Literature”	JALTAI
15	Oct. 28–29, 2004	Sahitya Akademi & ICC, New Delhi	Indo-Japan Seminar on Japanese Literature in Indian Perspective	JNU, NIJL, & Sahitya Akademi
16	30 July, 2004	JNU Faculty Centre	Meet The Writer	Writer’s Forum, JNU
17	2005	DEAS, DU	Workshop on Japanese Literature	DU
18	Nov. 18–19, 2005	Sahitya Akademi & IIT, New Delhi	Int’l Seminar on Japanese Literature	DU, Sahitya Akademi, JF, NIJL
19	Feb. 4, 2005	IIC	The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05	CSDS & Jamia Millia Islamia
20	Feb. 16–18, 2005	JNU	Int’l Seminar on East Asian Literatures in India	CJK & NEAS, JNU
21	Nov. 19, 2005	IIT Auditorium	Literature based Performance in Japanese : <i>Nezumi no yomeiri / Hiroshima no pika / Yamamba no nishiki</i>	DEAS & IJALC
22	Feb. 25, 2006	Japan Foundation	Workshop on Haiku: A Tribute to Professor S. B. Varma	JALTAI & Japan Foundation
23	April 20–21, 2006	Kalindi College	Seminar on Translation and Interpretation	Kalindi College
24	2006	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	A Day with Japanese Poetic Aestheticism	IJALC, Akogare no Kai & JF
25	Nov. 15–16, 2007	Japan Foundation	Lecture & Demonstration on haiku	ICJC & Oxford Book Store
26	Sept. 28, 2007	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Special Lecture on Japanese Literature by Hiroshi Araki	Japan Foundation
27	Feb. 27–28, 2007	Japan Foundation	International Seminar on Japanese Literature: Sense of Seasons in Japanese literature	JNU & NIJL
28	Oct. 26–28, 2007	JNU, New Delhi	Transcending Cultural Aestheticism: Exploring Literary Exchanges between India and Japan in Poetic Forms and Content (India Chapter)	IJALC, JNU, Sahitya Akademi, ICCR, Takushoku University, JF
29	23–25 November, 2007	Takushoku University, Tokyo Japan	Transcending Cultural Aestheticism: Exploring Literary Exchanges between India and Japan in Poetic Forms and Content (Japan Chapter)	IJALC, Sahitya Akademi, ICCR & Takushoku University & JF
30	2007, Oct. 28	JNU, Audi. SSS	<i>Antarang</i> : Indo-Japan Poetry Concert	IJALC
31	2007	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	A Day with <i>Konjaku monogatari</i>	IJALC, IJWA, JNU, Embassy of Japan, JF

32	2008	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Himalaya Kii God Mein: Japan India Poetry Recital	ICJC
33	2008	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Workshop on Translating tanka of Tawara Machi	IJALC, Embassy of Japan & JF
34	2008	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Indo-Japan Symposium on The Ganga: A Trans-cultural Interpretation	IJALC, Embassy of Japan & JF
35	2008	JNU, New Delhi	Mushaira: A Confluence of Japanese & Urdu Poetry	IJALC, Raftar Adbi Forum & JF
36	2008, Feb. 21	JNUTA, JNU	Discussion and Book Release of <i>Chabi</i> : Hindi Rendition of Tanizaki Junichirō's Novel <i>Kagi</i>	IJALC
37	2008, Feb. 28	SLC&L, JNU	Seminar on Japanese Culture	CJK & NEAS, JNU
38	2008 Nov. 28–29	JF, New Delhi	Indo-Japan Meet on Ishikawa Takuboku	Akogare no Kai (India Chapter of Int'l Society of Takuboku Studies) & IJALC
39	2008, Nov. 28–29	Okakura Tenshin Gallery, JF, New Delhi	Tanka on Canvas	IJALC, Shoonya
40	2007	Japan Foundation, New Delhi	Celebrating Japan's Children's Day: Hum Panchi Ek Daal Ke	ICJC
41	2008	JNU, New Delhi	National Seminar on Role of Literary Text in Teaching of Japanese Language	CJK & NEAS, JNU
42	2008	Darbanga Hall, Calcutta University, Kolkata	International poets meet	Michael Madhusudan Academy, Kolkata
43	March 3, 2009	DEAS	Workshop on Dream and Fantasy in Japanese Literature	IJALC & NIJL
44	March 4, 2009	JF, New Delhi	Seminar on Dream and Fantasy in Japanese Literature	IJALC, NIJL & JF
45	2009, March, 6–8	JNU	International Conference On “Changing Global Profile of Japanese Studies : Trends and Prospects	CJK&NEAS, JNU
46	2009 April 24	JF, New Delhi	Bharat-Japan Sahitya Milan: Ono no Komachi, Mahadevi Verma, Shiraishi Kazuko	IJALC
47	2009, April 24–30	Okakura Tenshin Gallery, JF	Poetry on canvas: Ono no Komachi and Shiraishi Kazuko	IJALC & Shoonya
48	2009, June 12	IIC	Indo-Japan Friendship Group meeting	SWYAA-INDIA
49	2009, June 29 th	Tagore Hall, Japan Foundation	Workshop on Translating Poetry: Ono no Komachi and Contemporary Indian poets	IJALC & Akogare no Kai

50	2009, 3 & 4 November	JNU	Changing Perception of Japan in South Asia in the New Asian Studies in India & other SAARC Countries	Nichibunken & CJK&NEAS, JNU
51	2009, November 6	India International Centre	“Momiji Ke Rang”	ICJC
52	November 30, 2009	India International Centre	Discussion & Book Release: On <i>Taketori monogatari</i> ’s Translation in Hindi by Akio Haga	Mahatma Gandhi Int. Hindi Univ. & Kurarey Co.
53	12–13 February, 2010	Tagore Hall, The Japan Foundation	“Literature & Paintings”	CJK&NEAS, JNU & NIJL
54	12–20 February, 2010	Tibetan Pavilion	Japanese Art Exhibition: Calligraphy and Noh Mask	Auroville
56	26 February, 2010	Calligraphy Exhibition & Book Release: Tanka Main Bhartiya Rang	Tagore Hall, Japan Foundation	IJALC & JF
57	12–13 March, 2010	International Seminar on Language Education as a bridge between Language and Culture	Committee Room, SLL & CS, JNU	CJK & NEAS, JNU, JF & Waseda University, Japan
58	March 29, 2010	Conference Centre, University of Delhi	National Conference on East Asian Languages and Translation Techniques	DEAS, DU

ii. Role of the Embassy of Japan and the Japan Foundation

As both University of Delhi and JNU have foreign language departments; the university earmarks financial resources for the purpose of procuring teaching and reading material. For this purpose special grants under the Area Studies Programme of the University Grants Commission (hereinafter UGC) were liberally utilized. The initial efforts, for valid reasons, were confined to procuring language teaching materials and teaching aids. The Embassy of Japan in India provided the much-needed support in setting up of audio-visual facility for students in both the universities and they continue to receive generous support from the Embassy on a regular basis. In the late 1990s the Embassy of Japan gifted equipment and infrastructure to view NHK programmes on the television in both the departments. This provided an opportunity to students and teachers to remain abreast with current affairs and developments in art, culture and literature in Japan on a daily basis.

The Japan Foundation under its different schemes has helped the two departments in building up their libraries through liberal books and equipment grants provided annually as also through its visiting professor programme. It needs to be emphasized that ever since the Delhi office of the Japan Foundation was established in India, there has been an appreciable increase in exposition of Japanese culture and arts through exhibitions, live performances and workshops. Recently, an authors’ meet was successfully concluded in Delhi, Calcutta and Tokyo at the behest of the Japan Foundations Writers’ Caravan. This provided an opportunity for the Indian and Japanese literati to talk freely and understand each other’s perspectives.

The Japan Cultural and Information Centre (hereinafter JCIC) in Delhi and Consulate offices of the Embassy of Japan in some of the major cities too have been instrumental in providing a forum and opportunity to Indian population to learn about Japanese creative and performing arts, and culture. The JCIC has been screening documentary and feature films in Delhi as well as other places that include schools, colleges, and university campuses. Japan Cultural month is celebrated each year for the last five years in the major cities of India, which has helped the two countries come closer in understanding the common cultural bondage.

iii. Role of Associations and Voluntary Organizations

The most prominent role in sustaining sudden growth in the field has come from a few voluntary educational and cultural organizations, duly supported by the Japanese industry, Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan. Out of 58 seminars and conferences, nearly 80 percent were organized by associations and voluntary organizations. As many as three voluntary associations were established besides four that have been continuing from the past. Indian voluntary associations have also established direct links with Japanese associations, professional bodies and universities. Sweety in her evaluation of Japanese Literature research in India has devoted adequate space to the role of seminars and professional associations in India in promoting Japanese literature in India. Arima has also broached on this subject.. The role of Japan Cultural Month dedicated at showcasing the variegated cultural hues of Japan in enabling literary meets has been very significant.

iv. Role of Visiting Professors from Japan

It is important to note that with the turn of the new millennium the number of Japanese scholars with specialization in Japanese literature began through institutional collaborations in a big way. This was facilitated by the international exchange programme of the Japan Foundation. Both DU and JNU directly benefitted by this in a big way providing very close interaction between faculty and more significantly between the visiting professors and the students, who had the privilege of learning Japanese literature directly from the native professors.

During the first decade of the 21 Century at least 10 professors of Japanese literature visited JNU and DU. The notable among them were Professor Katsuhiko Hamakawa (2001 & 2006), Professor Kawamura Minato, Professor Mochizuki Yoshitsugu (2005 & 2007), Professor Hara, Professor Itō, Professor Teruo Ikeuchi, Professor Komatsu, Professor Araki, Professor Teiji Sakata, Professor Haruki Ii and a few others whom I may have missed out due to lack of information at my end. The faculty and students continue to receive necessary support from the visiting professors even after completion of their tenure in India. The guidance and supervision bestowed by them will go a long way in developing and strengthening the academic and research activities on Japanese literature in the department in particular and India in general. Visiting Professors taught following courses on the Japanese Literature to the M.

A. Japanese students at DU:

- (a) Survey of Japanese literature
- (b) Representative works of *shi*, *geki*, *shōsetsu* and *monogatari*, *nikki* & *zuihitsu*
- (c) Guided M. A. and M. Phil students in their research/dissertation work.

Visiting Professors highlighted the trends, themes, and genre of each period with respect to modern Japanese Literature. They also provided in-depth analysis of select writers and their work. The visiting Professors also helped the students by providing original Japanese materials and books, which helped students and faculty members a great deal. Besides these common activities each individual teacher also conducted some other activities. Professor Teruo Ikeuchi during his tenure at DU had lecture in JNU and hence interacted with other institute's students, teachers and scholars through invited lectures. He delivered lectures at Bangalore University also. He also participated in India—Japan seminar on Japanese literature organized by JNU and NIJL held in Japan Foundation. He had fruitful interaction with Indian poets and translated some of their poetry into Japanese which got published to commemorate Indo-Japan year. Mochizuki Yoshitsugu during his tenure conducted classes and delivered lectures in DU and JNU. He actively provided the necessary support in organizing three major workshops besides organizing several quiz competitions, which were not only informative but were full of humour and wit that was liked by the audience and participating students. Some of the workshops convened at his behest were:

- (a) A Day with *Konjaku monogatari* was held at Japan foundation on 15 December 2007.
- (b) A Workshop on Translating Tanka of Tawara Machi on 2 February, 2008.
- (c) Indo-Japan Symposium on The Ganga: A Trans-cultural Interpretation on 5 February, 2008 held in Japan Foundation.
- (d) Professor Mochizuki conducted three quiz contests on *Konjaku monogatari*, Tawara Machi and Ishikawa Takuboku that saw participation of over fifty students and two dozen Indian poets.

Professor Hamakawa Katsuhiko during his visiting tenure in DU engaged himself in a number of academic activities. He delivered several lectures in JNU and DU and also at the *Fujinkai*, New Delhi. Professor Ii Haruki and Professor Itō Tetsuya, both from NIJL have shown great academic interest in promotion of Japanese literature research in India. As prominent experts on *Genji monogatari* they were instrumental in organizing the first quiz competition on *Hyaku-nin-issu* and *Genji*. During their stay in India they tirelessly dedicated their time interacting with students of DU and JNU, delivering lectures and distributing research materials across various institutions. It was at the behest of Professor Itō Tetsuya duly supported by National Institute of Japanese Literature that we have had four very useful

seminars organized in India attended by experts of Japanese literature from Japan in a large number. These have provided immense opportunities particularly to the research students of Japanese literature to acquaint themselves with the pedagogical and methodological issues in teaching and research in Japanese literature.

A large number of students, research scholars and teachers from University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University have benefited from these academic activities in a big way. The guidance and supervision bestowed by them will go a long way in strengthening the academic and research activities on Japanese literature in India. Students had the benefit of having been taught by the native visiting Professors and enjoyed their classes enormously.

4. Major Themes

The disciplinary perspective and research paradigm can only emerge by presenting a synoptic account of the themes that have caught the attention of researchers in recent past. My objective here would be to mention the broad themes than attempting a critical appreciation. One of the most popular themes in Japanese literature research in India has been the portrayal of the processes of social change in general both in the wake of transition of a traditional agrarian society to an industrial society and the kinds of stresses affecting family and gender relations. Social change, woman and gender relations emerged as the dominant themes of research in Japanese literature in India. The book titled *Narratives of Change: Society and Women in Japan* deals with the process of social change and the place of women in Japan from the pre-Meiji to the contemporary times. The focus of this research is on re-interpretation of narratives in order to understand the historical course if social change impinging on the triangular relationship between gender, literature and society. *Enlightenment of Women & Social Change* takes the reader to the world of Shimazaki Tōson's writings where author examines as to how women's role changed during Meiji period. *Tremors Within: Gender Discourse in Modern Japan* is an engagement with social history, gender and feminist criticism, and literature in the context of modern Japan. The book provides an in-depth analysis of gender discourse in Japan with reference to womanhood, sexuality and in conjunction with state policies and women's movement in Japan. Moin looked into the problems of prostitutes and Geisha in Japanese society in Nagai Kafū's *Hikage no hana*. Geisha has been taken up by yet another researcher, "Redefining Geisha: An Analysis of the gender order as portrayed in *Udekurabe* and *Nigorie*." In *Haha rokuya* of Ōoka Shōhei, Nesar Khan analyses the protagonist's sorrow state of mind and how he is unable to forget his mother who was a geisha. Nesar Khan has compared this story with the Natsume Sōseki's *Yume jū'ya*.

Japanese woman in literature is also seen in different perspectives by Indian scholars. In this connection woman in poetry, women in post war literature and women in the writings of Higuchi Ichiyō, Enchi Fumiko and Kawabata Yasunari's and gender in literature are some of the themes on which research papers have been presented in the recent past. The question of the disintegration of Japanese

family structure since 1970, when Japan reached the peak of its fast paced economic growth has also been attempted.

Understanding or interpreting ‘Self’ is another theme which Indian scholars are trying to discover through their reading of Japanese authors. Moin is working towards understanding the notion of self/egoism in Shiga Naoya’s *Wakai*. Anubhuti examines the same subject in Abe Kōbō’s ‘Woman in the Dunes’ (*Suna no onna*). Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s *Sewamono* (Social Drama) as a social metaphor of self identity forms the subject of Ambika’s research. She attempted to explore yet another dimension of Chikamatsu’s writings. Prasad Bakare attempts to understand the conflict with ‘self’ and hardships of the protagonist in the world of fantasy as depicted in ‘Maho no choku’ of Abe Kōbō.

Literatures of all genres, times and cultures have been preoccupied with the questions of life and death and complexities of human mind. Sumita in Ibuse Masuji’s debut work *Sanshōuo* brings these dimensions very effectively. Vinayak Bhardwaj has looked into the Nakajima Atsushi’s story *Sangetsu ki* in order to explore the complexities of human desire in life and after death.

Geeta Sachdeva takes up the theme of pure love as manifested in the writings of Kawabata Yasunari with special reference to ‘Fushi’. She approaches the same story from the point of life and death. Supriti brings forth opposites in destruction and beauty on the one hand, and life and death, on the other through Mishima Yukio’s *Kinkakuji*. Complexity of human mind is seen through Tanizaki’s world by other scholars also.

The devastation of war and the accompanying human tragedies form yet another theme of interest on which Indian researchers have been engaged in the recent past. George attempts to unravel the role Japanese writers played during and after many a wars Japan fought until the World War II. Writers’ role in the society as opinion makers is widely acknowledged. They have the magical power to mobilize the mass, either supporting or opposing the policies and political designs of the government and rulers. They have the calibre to turn upside down the mood and tempo of the civil life of a nation through their powerful writings and speeches. Ever since the Meiji Restoration, the writers and intellectuals in Japan enjoyed high prestige and respect. Discussing literature in the context of war generally implies presenting accounts of joys and sorrows of victory and defeat; destructions of life and property; pains and sorrow of separation. The cultural transformation of the Japanese state and public opinion was also an important dimension in this context. Janashruti highlights the fact that though one comes across Hiroshima in literature, Nagasaki remains marginalised. The Plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki was more powerful a weapon than the Uranium bomb on Hiroshima that left 73,884 dead 74,909 injured. Laxmi has attempted to trace how women have been portrayed taking the cross-section of three wartime and post war short stories.

One cannot ignore the importance of early and medieval Japanese literature as they continue to have the quintessential influence on the modern and contemporary literature. Chauhan and Khanna provide the opportunity to peep into the Japanese literature from the past and their connections with

India. Change and continuity is an ongoing process whereby the new elements go on replacing the existing ones yet the tradition remains, ostensibly under a new garb. In the literary tradition of Japan a glaring example of such ongoing and unbroken chain is seen in all the ages but during the Edo period it emerged conspicuously in a unique style in the *gesaku* writings reflected upon by Khanna in her recent work. Similarly the works of Chikamatsu and Bashō have also received some critical reinterpretation in India. Incidentally the epical novel of Japan *Genji monogatari* has not received the due attention by Indian researchers. Ancient poetry has been also been explored by the Indian scholars in translations as well as in research.

Three day conference on Transcending Cultural Aestheticism: Exploring Literary Exchanges between India and Japan in Poetic forms and contents was an academic and cultural engagement with Indian and Japanese poetry. The purpose of the conference was to discuss research papers from notable scholars from India and Japan exploring the literary traditions in their respective countries and deciphering the ways through which literary influences both in the mainstream traditions and poetry-based performing arts in India and Japan have received influences from each other. The said conference on mutual poetry provided an opportunity for poets, poetry performers, literary translators, and scholars from our two countries to discuss and share wide ranging issues pertaining to the area of mutual poetry and also prepare a road map for the future so as to build more vibrant cultural and literary bonds between our two countries.

The technical sessions on Perspectives on Japanese poetry provided an opportunity to understand the trends and themes in Japanese poetry examined from the vantage positions in Japanese and Indian poetic traditions. Murao Seiichi discussed the forms and contents of ancient Japanese poetry and Indian influence on it while Mizukawa Fumiko highlighted the modern Japanese poetry, and the course of a shift from 7 and 5-syllable fixed verses to a free verse and from a literary style to a colloquial style taking the case of Hagiwara Sakutarō, a modern poet of Japan. Hagiwara heralded the era of “poems for viewing” than “poems for reading”. Poonam Nand Dey took the theme of proletarian poet Nakano Shigeharu who emphasized that one should shun away from all that is elegant, romantic and sentimental and allow spontaneous thoughts emerging from the depths of one’s heart even if it were full of disgrace. Theme of cosmism in Miyazawa Kenji’s poems was taken up by George. The place of haiku and tanka in the history of Japanese poetry was discussed by Mochizuki Yoshitsugu while a critical analysis of Yosano Akiko’s tanka was carried out by Raj Lakhi Sen. Reema dwelled upon Ishikawa Takuboku’s tanka. Understanding cultural aestheticism of women poets in the *Ogura hyaku-nin-issu* and metaphors in *Man’yōshū* were also the highlights of themes taken up from ancient poetry of Japan. The modern poetry ‘Koi no uta’ by Higuchi Ichiyō, Takamura Kōtarō’s ‘Remon’, ‘Yashi no mi’ by Shimazaki Tōson, and ‘Ubaguruma’ by Miyoshi Tatsuji introduced varied facets of Japanese poetic sensibilities.

Similarly sessions on Indian Poetry explored various aspects of Indian poetic aestheticism. Krishna Dutt Paliwal highlighted the depiction of nature and love in Indian poetry. The poetic sensibilities

of Muktibodh and Ramdhari Singh Dinkar were discussed from their positions on nationalism. Their themes and contents were compared with that of Japanese nationalistic poets. Perspectives on Comparative Poetry had three sessions, where papers on translating each other's poetry were read. The problems of translating Japanese popular songs in Hindi and devotional songs of India into Japanese and Takuboku's tanka into Indian languages were the main highlights.

Poets and scholars from other parts of India presented the trends and issues in Bangla, Telugu, Himachali and Marathi poetry while comparing them with Japanese poetry. The world of women poets in modern Indian poetry, haiku in India and its influence on Indian poetry, and haiku in China were subjects of cross cultural interpretations.

The three-day Japan-India Conference in Tokyo was held with the focal theme on exploring and documenting developments in Indian poetry studies and research in Japan and also exploring Indian influences on Japanese poetry both in forms and content. Ms. Toshiko Miyachi presented children's songs and poetry in Japan and India while Mizokami Tomio presented some of the findings of his research on translating Indian film songs into Japanese. The Japanese audience was treated to a variety of poetic traditions, both mainstream and regional. The world of contemporary Himachali poetry was discussed at length by Varyam Singh. 'Shaping the East Through Translations: Ecstasies and Anxieties' by Ranjit Saha, 'Jivanand Das: Poet and Poetry' by Prayag Shukla, 'Nagarjun ki kavita mein samkalinta aur yathartha-bodh' by Suresh Salil, 'Dhumal: Poet and His Poetry' by Vinod Bharadwaj, 'Position of poets in contemporary India' by Mangalesh Dabral and 'The World of Women in the History of Indian Literature' by Devendra Chaubey were some of the papers deliberated upon. Ganga Prasad Vimal reflected upon the problems of literary translations while Unita Sachidanand presented an overview of developments in Japanese poetry studies, research and translations in India.

Indian researchers currently studying in Japan have taken up the following authors and it is expected that the writings of these authors will soon come under Indian scanner. Some such authors are Hori Tatsuo, Miyazawa Kenj, Kawabata Yasunari, Yosano Akiko and Hirabayashi Taiko.

Conclusions

This paper charts out the course of developments in Japanese literature studies in India with special reference to what I term as the 'fourth phase' (2004–2009). From the above it is not difficult to cull out the fact that Japanese literature studies in India have shown tremendous upward movement in a very short span of time. The trajectory of its growth has both been strong and varied in terms of themes and issues as well as the plurality of activities it has given impetus to. While there has been a tumultuous surge towards literary translations, particularly of the Japanese verses, one cannot but recognize that literature and visual art both painting and performing have begun to merge creating a very different direction in which art and literature may grow in India.

But these developments have not taken place without hindrances. The major hindrance has come

from within as institutional support within academic institutions has been too little. There is an urgent need to further strengthen the gains made in the field of Japanese literature studies in India by providing opportunities for research within the university system-going beyond the boundaries of JNU and DU. Many more universities must open new departments to cater to the emerging research needs in the areas of Japanese, comparative literature and culture studies.

APPENDIX

Translation and Research on Japanese Literature in India (2004–2009)

(List is in chronological order followed by alphabetical entries)

A. Translation

Arima, Takashi 2004a

“Song for a Ten Yen Coin”, in Bidhan Datta, *Heaven*, p. 43.

Arima, Takashi 2004b

“Forging Money”, in *Heaven*, p. 44.

Datta, Bidhan 2004

A Message from the Unknown: A Collection of Poems by Takashi Arima (Translation in Bengali), Michael Madhusudan Academy, Kolkata.

Hino, Seiji 2004

“Longing & Fresh Green”, in *Heaven*, p.41.

Ikedo, Kazuyoshi 1004

“Spring and Autumn”, in *Heaven*, p. 33.

Reddy, J. Bapu 2004

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Bhardwaj, Vinayak 2005

Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s one tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in Sachidanand, Unita, (Ed.), *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, IJALC, p.60.

Bhardwaj, Vinod 2005

Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s four tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, IJALC, p.36.

Bhattacharya, Sumita 2005

Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s one tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p.59.

Buddiraja, Raj 2005

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“Ek Chammach Bhar Koko” (Hitosaji Cocoa), Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s poems in Hindi in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p.42

- Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 49.
- Hoshina, Teruyuki 2005b
“One Fine Autumn Day” (Akibare), Translation of Tanaka Katsumi’s poem in English, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 49.
- Janashruti, C. S. 2005
“Saundrya” (Watashi ga ichiban kirei datta toki), Translation of Ibaraki Noriko’s poem in Hindi, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 52.
- Joshi, Trinetra 2005
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- Khan, Imran 2005
Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s one tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 59.
- Khan, Moin 2005
Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s two tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 60.
- Khan, Nesar 2005
Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s one tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 59.
- Khanna, Anita 2005
“Fafoondi aur Yudha” (Kaabi & Senso), Translation of Kaneko Mitsuharu’s poems in Hindi, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, pp. 49–50.
- Kumar, Narender 2005
Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s one tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 60.
- Kumari, Nisha 2005
Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s two tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 59.
- Meattle, Himank 2005
Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s two tanka in Hindi from *Ichiku no suna*, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 60.
- Mukherji, Priyadarshi 2005
“Ek naye Sahar ka Nirman” (Atarashiki miyako no kiso), Translation of Ishikawa Takuboku’s poems in Hindi, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 41.
- Naresh, Ankita 2005
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- Pal, K., Vinoy 2005
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Chauhan, Manjushree 2005a

“Ham Chhitak Jayenge” (Bokura ha Sokai Suru), Translation of Miyoshi Tatsuji’s poem in Hindi, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 51.

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Dey, Poonam, Nand 2005

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Dhasmana, Kendraj 2005

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“Sham” (Yugata), Translation of Tanikawa Shuntarō’s poem in Hindi, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 48.

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Hoshina, Teruyuki 2005a

“Prisoners of War” (Furyo), Translation of Momota Sōji’s poem in English, in *Souvenir: International*

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"Kathphorhwa", translation of Shiraishi Kazuko's poem in Hindi, in *Souvenir: International Seminar on Japanese Literature*, p. 5.

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